



FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON



Organizing a Fundraising Luncheon

AWC Zurich's Best-Practice to Meet Your Own Needs and Resources!

Members attend a fundraising luncheon for 3 reasons:

- They want to support the club and their friends organizing the event
- They want to support the charity
- They are attracted by the menu and/or program

With this in mind, it's important to meet all 3 goals in order to attract the largest crowd, and raise the most funds.

AWC Zurich is a large club of about 450 members with a clubhouse and professional kitchen. We hold almost all our events in the clubhouse. Sometimes we use a professional caterer to provide a meal, but when we want to raise the most money, we do all the work and cooking ourselves.

For our *Cambodian Water Wells Fundraiser*, we assembled a fairly large team, and broke the project down into many tasks that were suited to the individual talents of our team members.

Naturally, the theme of "*Cambodia*" surfaced. When selecting the menu, we enlarged the theme to Southeast Asia. Our menu consisted of:

Welcome Cocktail: Singapore Sling (with pineapple & maraschino cherry on drink umbrella),
Shrimp crackers, Mixed nuts

Luncheon: Khmer Spicy Salad, Cambodian Chicken Curry, White Rice (Small decorative orchid on each plate)

Dessert: Mango Mousse, Coffee/Tea

We had 73 participants at the luncheon, which was about what we expected (we take event reservations through our club website). I recommend reservations mandatory for an event like this. We choose this menu because it was reminiscent of Cambodia, inexpensive, and appealing to many. It was a little exotic, but not "too" exotic. Most of the cooking involved chopping of vegetables, for which we had several volunteers. The event was scheduled for a Tuesday; we prepared the individual desserts and filled each small mousse glass (plastic), loaded them on trays, covered the trays in plastic wrap, and left them in our clubhouse kitchen. On Monday, our 5 cooking volunteers came in and chopped vegetables for about 5 hours (25 hours of chopping total). Tuesday morning, the cooks came in early and assembled the ingredients for the Spicy Salad, and cooked the Chicken Curry.

Beforehand, the planner searched for Cambodian food recipes that would appeal to a large crowd. The Cambodian diet is heavily weighted toward fish, but a fish curry was deemed too expensive, too smelly, too much chance of overcooking, and appealing to fewer people than chicken. We almost always include a Welcome Cocktail with our Luncheons, and have found this a successful strategy. We choose the Singapore Sling because it is so famous. Many have had one, and those that have not had one, want to try one. Alcohol is very expensive in our country, but many members have unused liquor in their home cabinets. We put out the call to our members when we decide on a “cocktail” and we almost always get all the liquor needed. We return any not needed. Many members are happy to get rid of unused bottles of liquor that they have on hand.

Our kitchen has only 4 burners and 2 ovens, plus 2 microwaves, so we had to plan a menu that required only these elements. We planned the portions carefully. Our recipes were usually for 6 or 8 servings, and modifying them to serve 72 is often not a straight multiplying task. One can increase the vegetables and chicken in this way, but spices, herbs and especially salt often have to be adjusted. I made the “normal” recipe for my family twice, so I would be familiar with it, and how it should taste. I found that the “mild” spices could just be multiplied, but the “hot” spices, and the salt - had to be adjusted down slightly to keep the recipe from being too hot and too salty to be appreciated by the majority. I did receive a comment from 1 that “spicier” would have been appreciated. In this case, I think a dish of chilies or Sriracha sauce (available worldwide) on the tables would have been a good addition.

We researched making white rice for a large crowd and found several tips for making it in the oven. With fingers crossed, we used this method (available on the web) and it worked marvelously!! Just follow the instructions carefully - make sure the water is boiling before placing it in the tightly covered pans - and then don't disturb until the time is up. This works great!

Our lead chef made detailed spreadsheets of each recipe so there would be no mistake of ingredients on Luncheon day. She prepared these days in advance with columns for several differing numbers of attendees. She checked those numbers over several times - it's very easy to make a math mistake when converting several different recipes from serving 6 to now serving 75. Having the numbers on a spreadsheet eliminated a possible math disaster.

It's really important to plan the portions carefully and then to cost our each dish. If you cook too much, you are literally throwing money away. Our club has access to a wholesale grocery store. Stores like Metro are available in many countries - and can make the difference between reasonable costs for an event. We have a large number of ethnic stores in our city, and those supplied the items we couldn't find at wholesale - all at a minimal cost. Shopping smart can reduce food costs by 25% or more!

VIP's

We are fortunate to have an office of the Cambodian Deputy Consul in our city. Our team determined early that his attendance would increase the attendance of our members. A sub-committee volunteered to work on that. One member emailed the Consul office. That was a waste of time. Another tried telephoning. That didn't work either. One

member of the team went to the Consul's office and waited to see him in person. He was skeptical at first, but her sincerity, salesmanship, preparedness, and perseverance won over the Consul. He attended with 2 of his staff. He also provided some decorations for our event, and provided a lead to a Cambodian entertainer. The perseverance of this one member in presenting herself at the office of the Cambodian Deputy Consul cannot be undervalued. A personal appeal is always the most convincing - and this member provided that.

Entertainment

We know what our members like - and what brings them out. A fashion show is high on the list of "favorites" and we determined early that providing that bonus would pay off with added attendance. One of our team members has a number of contacts in the local retail community. She approached one of her contacts, a retail store specializing in Asian inspired mostly silk clothing. We've learned that stores don't mind and often like to provide a fashion show to highlight their clothing line. The one thing that will scare them off has to provide models. The models are very expensive, and the retailer doesn't want to pay that for a market unproven. However, we now always offer our own members as models. The member-models don't have to be 6 feet tall and weigh 80 pounds. We provide "normal" size women -and this is a plus to the retailer, as well. For our Fashion Show, we had 4 member-models who each modeled 3 outfits. I think several of the girls bought at least one of the outfits they modeled. The rest of us learned of a new store with some terrific clothes - and several of us have added that store to our repertoire.

The Consul provided the name of a musician who played the tro, a Cambodian stringed instrument. These gentlemen performed for us free of charge, I am sure because we had the referral of the Consul.

Decorations

We are always very careful in this area because essentially, we use the decorations for about 3 hours and then they get thrown away - so we don't want to waste money on trash. But we do always want the room to look spectacular when we first open the doors to our cocktail room and to our dining room. We always use our white linen tablecloths. We select a color scheme, in this case, the colors of the Cambodian flag, as accents. We use colored paper napkins, folded in artistic ways, either on the plates, or perched on each water glass. We have an array of silk runners (just long lengths of fabric) in many colors that we use as accents on the bar, on buffet tables, or on side tables to make the room pop. One of our team members volunteered to make small traditional water wells as a table centerpiece for each table for this event. This member used to be a primary school teacher, and she often has ideas involving papier-mâché centerpieces. These cost the club nothing, and I think she enjoys making them. We also had a small number of decorations which the Consul furnished. I would say - take whatever they give you - and make use of it in some way. Our creative team disassembled and then reassembled some items to incorporate them into our room décor. But be careful with any flags - some countries have rules about honoring their flag.

Promotion

We always promote our events through our monthly club magazine and via our monthly electronic newsletter. Probably half of our reservations come in that way. However, an enthusiastic word of mouth campaign is usually what puts us over the top as far as success. Often, as we are putting together an event, we are able to confirm entertainment, but often close to the event. This is where our enthusiastic team members make the difference, by telling their friends “Did you hear we’ve got a fashion show for the Water Wells Luncheon? I saw a couple of the outfits - and they looked stunning on Mary!” “Did you hear the Cambodian Consul is coming to our Luncheon??” “Have you signed up for the Luncheon yet? Cathy is doing the cooking and you know what a great cook she is!” This is the kind of enthusiastic endorsement that fills that last few seats!

FINAL Numbers

We had 73 attendees

We charged 40 CHF per person (approximately \$40)

Our costs were about 550 CHF

We raised about 4,750 CHF in TOTAL on the day of event (less expenses of 550)

We had a small market of donated Cambodian goods from the Consul which raised about 350 CHF

Several members or tables donated an entire family or village well during the luncheon